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The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Identical letters dated 20 July 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit the text of a letter dated 20 July 2000 from A. Abdullah, the acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, addressed to you concerning the developments in Afghanistan.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 50, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dr. A. G. Ravan **Farhâdi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 20 July 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan presents its compliments to H. E. the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honor to communicate the following points about the problem of Afghanistan:

--Chapter I--

On the Renewed Summer Offensive Launched by the Taliban-Pakistan-bin Laden Axis

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The United Nations was duly informed through the letter dated 27 June 2000 of the reports on the arrival of more than 2,000 fresh recruits including Pakistan's Army regulars to the eastern Province of Jalalabad from Pakistan and large-scale preparations by Pakistan and the Taliban mercenaries for subsequent renewed offensives of July 1 and July 9, 2000 by the Taliban mercenaries, consignments of Pakistan's Armed Forces and members of the bin Laden Brigade, launched against the positions of the Armed Forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan in the Shamali Plains, north of Kabul.

July 1 Offensive: The first offensive, aimed to be expanded to the Sâlang Highway and Ghôrband and Nijrâb Districts, was repulsed, while the attackers suffered as many as 500 dead or wounded. The Government took as many as 40 Taliban mercenaries captive, presently in its custody.

Post-fighting reports by the Intelligence sources of the Government indicated that more than 200 Taliban dead bodies were transferred to Kabul, while many Pakistanis were taken to Pakistan. Meanwhile, many of the wounded opposition fighters were taken to the 'Taxila' and the 'Fowji' (<<Army>>) Foundation Hospitals in Peshawar, Pakistan.

During the operation, the Taliban conducted air sorties, leading to the death of many innocent civilians and the destruction of civilian sites.

July 9 Offensive: On July 9, 2000, the Taliban-Pakistan-bin Laden axis launched yet another offensive targeting Khalazay Village north of Kabul. At least 6,000 opposition troops including Pakistani military personnel, Pakistani students from religious schools,

Arabs and Taliban were involved in the operation, who despite limited initial gains were forced out by the Armed Forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

The Taliban casualties in this operation included 200 dead and over 300 wounded. Reports confirmed the destruction of 14 opposition tanks and 18 trucks, still laying in the area.

The indiscriminate Taliban aerial bombardment of civilian sites in the City of Châriкâr and Villages of Khalâzay, Rubât and Chaikal in the Shamâli Plains this time, however, left 28 civilians dead, 50 wounded and thousands internally displaced.

Ironically, after the defeat of the opposition, its mouthpieces launched a campaign of disinformation in an attempt to put the blame of the renewed fighting on the Islamic State of Afghanistan. The campaign interestingly gave bogus assurances by the Taliban not to engage in any further fighting.

With the elaborate details of the latest rounds of fighting, particularly of the use of conventional tactics, command and control of battles and use of heavy artillery—not familiar to the Taliban—as well as intercepted radio transmissions and massive logistical support which prove a progressive involvement of Pakistan Army personnel, it was a matter of dismay that the Security Council stopped short of at least condemning the attacks.

It may be recalled that last year's 'Summer Offensive' by the Taliban-Pakistan-bin Laden axis, despite our early warnings to the Security Council, led to the great humanitarian tragedy in which hundreds of thousands of the Shamâli inhabitants were driven out of their homes, who sought refuge in the Panjshir Valley. In light of that, it shall be reminded that primarily an opposition defeat in the battlefields thus far has prevented recurrence of such a tragic situation, one which cannot be absolutely thwarted in the future, should the renewed offensives not be condemned and measures aimed at their prevention not taken.

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1. At the present, Pakistan and its Taliban mercenaries are busy building up for yet another round of fighting, projected to begin any time soon.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan earnestly appeals to the United Nations to adopt immediate measures aimed at preventing further Taliban-Pakistan-bin Laden attacks. The Islamic State of Afghanistan expects of the Security Council to seriously condemn the renewed 'Summer Offensive' and further preparations by the Taliban-Pakistan-bin Laden axis.

2. The Islamic State of Afghanistan further appeals to the Security Council to mandate the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA) to dispatch an investigation team to Afghanistan to verify and report to the Security Council on the

presence of Pakistani armed men and Arab fighters—working in collusion with the Taliban.

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Adhering to its solemn commitment made during the two rounds of indirect talks sponsored by the Organization of Islamic Conference in March and May 2000 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia—rejected categorically by the Taliban—the Islamic State of Afghanistan reiterates its firm position that there is no military solution to the Afghan conflict and hereby declares once again its genuine desire and readiness for the cessation of armed conflict, a cease-fire and engagement in direct negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations.

--Chapter II--

On the remarks by the Pakistani Chief Executive and the Search for 'Lebensraum' by the Military Junta

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The main Pakistani position until early May 2000 suggested that Pakistan was not intervening in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Pakistani diplomats and officials claimed Pakistan maintained contacts with both parties to the conflict.

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However, Pakistan's NNI news agency reported on Thursday, May 25, 2000 that General Pervez Musharraf claimed Pakistan's pro-Taliban policy "in accordance with Pakistan national interest."

Advocating that Pakhtoons (Pashtuns) should be on the side of Pakistan, the General was quoted as saying, "We have a national security interest, both demographic and geographic." He further stated that in the realization of this security interest, "Pakhtoons should be on our side and they (Pakhtoons) are represented by Taliban."

General Musharraf reiterated, once again, those points in a statement in the Pakistani Institute of International Affairs on June 23, 2000. "With Afghanistan, one has to understand Pakistan national security concerns and must be clear to everyone, though not done earlier. No country in the world can force any other country to give up its national security interest," the General was quoted as saying.

The confession by the Pakistani military ruler marked a totally new perspective in the Pakistan-Afghanistan relations.

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The Pakistani military junta, unleashing this fresh political campaign under the pretext of "national security interest" at the cost of sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan. This is a flagrant violation of recognized international norms and principles and in clear contempt to the UN Charter. Pakistan has claimed the right to impose a certain political system through an ethnic group in its neighboring country.

This new method bears resemblance to the ideology pursued by the Nazis during WWII, who under the scheme of "lebensraum" justified their expansionism and hegemony at the price of millions killed and the invasion of adjacent and faraway territories.

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The Islamic State of Afghanistan, in light of the astonishing statements by General Pervez Musharraf, who through explicit articulation of the 'reasons' for the continued Pakistani military backing of the Taliban seeks Afghanistan's subjugation, would like to put the following in perspective:

1. The remarks, for the first time, bring to light the Pakistani junta's long-pursued hegemonic agenda aimed at turning Afghanistan into a subservient State and in fact a hub of terrorism, extremism, cultivation and trafficking of drugs, from which the Pakistani world-known corrupt military has perpetually benefited.

2. The Islamic State of Afghanistan strongly condemns the flagrant interventionist and ethnically provocative remarks on Afghanistan by the chief of Pakistani junta General Parvez Musharraf, which clearly aim to incite hatred among different ethnic groups of Afghanistan.

3. General Pervez Musharraf has to realize that his statements of May 25 and June 23, 2000 constitute a mistake and a confession, which complements the Pakistani historic blunder, revealing the Junta's expansionist goals in Afghanistan. The General's comments are neither beneficial to the peace and security of Pakistan or Afghanistan, nor the region. It is time that Pakistan's "Chief Executive," the military junta and its officials steered their country away from hegemonistic adventures they have embarked upon in Afghanistan.

4. The demagogic invoking of the so-called "Pakistan's security interests"--- in reality at the cost of sovereignty, independence and national unity of Afghanistan --- blatantly referred to by the Pakistani junta chief, reminds of the all-along hypocritical, deceitful and lip-serving attitude of the Pakistani regime toward the UN peace process and toward the project of convening a Lôya Jirga (Grand Assembly) in Afghanistan. The Pakistani Junta opposes the formation of a the "broad-based, fully representative and multi-ethnic government" mainstream of the process in Afghanistan , in a gross contradiction to Pakistan's acclaimed backing of the UN peace process in Afghanistan.

5. At a time when the Pakistani military regime can no longer stealthily mask its evident military involvement in Afghanistan camouflaged as the Taliban, and while the world community is getting ever-more focused on the Pakistani regime's creeping operation of narco-terrorism in Afghanistan, the views expressed by Mr. Musharraf on the "Islamabad demographic and geographic interests in Afghanistan through the Taliban as the representatives of the Pashtuns of Afghanistan" are a premeditated attempt to legitimize Pakistan's outright aggression in and domination of Afghanistan.

6. The remarks, irresponsible, hostile and yet grotesque, made by a military dictator, do not represent in any way the true aspirations of the Pakistani nation, having enjoyed historical fraternity and good neighborliness with the people of Afghanistan.

7. General Musharraf's statements are based on an erroneous perception of Afghanistan and a grotesquely and legendarily false 'statistics' of ethnic groups. Historically, Afghanistan has been a country of an ethnic mosaic, having fraternally and peacefully lived in a balanced coexistence for centuries.

8. The people of Afghanistan are aware that promotion of ethnic cleansing of Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras and other non-Pashtun groups is the result of provocations by the government of Pakistan and the ISI, committed under the guise of realizing Pashtun domination throughout Afghanistan.

9. Statements by General Musharraf have become subject to strong condemnation by the people of Afghanistan, including the Pashtuns and prominent Pashtun leaders.

10. The segment of the Taliban who are Afghan nationals have been brainwashed by the Pakistani military intelligence services (ISI) in such a manner so as to lack complete historical knowledge of Afghanistan, and hence to act counter to the religious, historic and ethnic traditions of their countrymen. Hence, their behavior—like an alien group—categorizes them as void of Afghan culture.

11. Pakistan's administrations have continuously denied local Pashtuns their fundamental rights in Pakistan. But now, the current administration unjustifiably and strangely claims itself to only protect the Pashtuns. Contrarily, even the Pashtuns in Pakistan have not had the right to name their own land.

12. The Islamic State of Afghanistan, backed by the undying resolve and vigilance of the people and of the Armed Forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan will continue to stand firm in defending the sovereignty, independence and national unity of Afghanistan against Pakistani aggression, carried out by armed Pakistani groups siding with the mercenary Taliban bands.

13. The Islamic State of Afghanistan calls upon the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the entire international community to seriously take note of the hegemonistic remarks by the Pakistani military ruler. These words indicate Pakistan's professed precepts in dealing with the situation in Afghanistan and the subsequent dire regional and international threats and consequences.

--Chapter III--

On the Heightened Pakistani-Taliban Terrorist Activities, their Perilous Impact on the Safety and Security of the Afghan People, and Implications for Regional Peace and Stability

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Less then 2 years after exposing the people of Afghanistan and the Afghan soil to an American missile strike launched back in August 1998 against terrorist training camps operated by international terrorists, in which more than a dozen of Pakistani terrorists were killed, the Pkistani-Taliban nexus has yet again provoked further threat of possible strikes by the Russian Federation, as an act of reprisal against new targets in the Pakistani-Taliban occupied territories of Afghanistan.

It is important to remember that terrorist training camps operating from the Taliban-held territories of Afghanistan whose dismantling has been repeatedly called for by the United Nations and the entire international community, have been established by the Government of Pakistan through the Taliban mercenaries and other extremist networks, who continue to utilize these territories as a ground for terrorist training, sheltering, planning and dispatching of elements seeking hostile acts against countries of the region and beyond, under the guise of Islam mainly in pursuit of Pakistani hegemonistic objectives.

For the past two years, the United Nations Security Council in its resolutions 1214 of 8 December 1998 and 1267 of 15 October 1999, unanimously adopted, has explicitly demanded the Taliban mercenaries and its foreign collaborator, Pakistan, to refrain from sheltering, supporting and training of terrorists and planning of terrorist acts from the Afghanistan soil against other countries, and to extradite to the requesting States those individuals indicted for committing international acts of terrorism.

The international community has a fresh memory of the involvement of Pakistan and of its mercenaries, the Taliban, in the Kargil operation in India. Although the operation earned the Pakistani Government an outright defeat and a bone-chilling humiliation, the Pakistani military intelligence (ISI) managed to redirect those combined recruits to subsequent operations in Afghanistan. The latter operation, however, then came to be best known for the scorched-earth practice and forcible displacement of some 200,000 civilians, north of Kabul by the same groups. Dozens of those invaders were held captive by the Islamic State of Afghanistan and still remain in its captivity.

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Remaining highly alarmed by the latest deterioration of the situation in and around Afghanistan, directly resulting from Pakistani-sponsored policy of military occupation and training of terrorists, the Islamic State of Afghanistan wishes to put the following in perspective:

1. The people of Afghanistan have become victimized by terrorism and by the activities of elements affiliated with an array of international terrorist organizations from Southeast Asia to South Asia and the Middle East, who all continue to be recruited by the Government of Pakistan through its military intelligence, the ISI. All of this is done for waging what Pakistanis extremists call "Jihâd" or a holy war against States within and outside the region. Pakistan also remains as the sole origin of arming and equipping of the stretching columns of terrorists coming from around the globe to Pakistan, who then are dispatched to Afghanistan for military training and deployment to locations in part other than the front lines within Afghanistan. Pakistan is providing ground and air support, petroleum and other logistical support to the Pakistani-Taliban-bin Laden army, the latest developments.

2. The Islamic State of Afghanistan strongly condemns the outrageous ceaseless Pakistan adventurist activities in Afghanistan, which have put the life and property of the innocent civilian people of Afghanistan at grave risk of reprisal acts by third States threatened. It shall be reminded in this context, that provocation of any reprisal act by a third State on Afghanistan and thereupon the potential damaging results on the life and property of the people of Afghanistan would establish Pakistan as entirely responsible.

3. The Islamic State of Afghanistan remains convinced upon the inadmissibility of the use of the Afghan soil for waging war and engaging in hostile acts against the security and stability of third States in the region and beyond. However, it also believes that air strikes or aerial bombardment of terrorist training camps, given the inefficiency of the August 1998 cruise missile raids, will not eliminate terrorist activities.

4. The Islamic State of Afghanistan reiterates its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The Islamic State of Afghanistan believes it is high time that the UN Security Council—in accordance with relevant Resolutions—shall undertake effective measures against Pakistan, which is the prime source of establishing terrorist training camps and terrorist activities in the Taliban-held territories of Afghanistan for the purposes of advancing Pakistan's geopolitical interests in South and Central Asia, and beyond. The Islamic State of Afghanistan also calls upon the Security Council to take further drastic measures against the Taliban mercenaries to curb their terrorist activities.

--Chapter IV--
On the OIC-sponsored Jeddah Peace Talks

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Responding positively to the proposal for peace talks made by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Islamic State of Afghanistan on 8 March, 2000, attended in good faith the two-day peace talks, the first in a series, hosted by the OIC in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which were also attended by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Hon. Francesc Vendrell.

The OIC team, holding separate meetings and discussing different issues with the two parties in Jeddah, laid special emphasis on the need for observing a moratorium on the fighting, citing the sanctity and importance of the approaching advent of the Hajj and of

the Eid al-Adhâ. The suggestion, though not initialed, was embraced with no preconditions by the delegation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

It is worth reminding that the Jeddah meeting came only days after the Taliban mercenaries had launched a renewed offensive, during which the Security Council on March 3, 2000 expressed its dismay and recalled the repeated demands by the Council that the Afghan parties cease the fighting and resume negotiations under UN auspices without delay and preconditions in full compliance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Against this background, however, the Taliban mercenaries, evidently commissioned by the ruling Pakistani ISI, appear to have had the intention of pursuing their military option, for their unabated aerial and ground attacks on the Government-held territories have continued, to date.

Below is a brief record of the Pakistani-Taliban military operations which have taken place after the Jeddah meeting:

--10 March, 6:00a.m. Afghanistan standard time (AST):
Pakistani-Taliban forces attacked Northern Sâlang. The attack was repulsed within the course of a two-hour battle. Attackers sustained 60 casualties and left behind 7 mortal remains;

--11 March, 4:00a.m. AST:
The Pakistani-Taliban troops launched a multi-pronged attack on Surkh-Sang and Bajgâh areas around Dara-i-Suff, south-west of the province of Samangan, making some advances. The Government forces repelled the mercenaries form the areas later in the day;

--13 March, 7-9a.m. AST:
An attack by the Pakistani-Taliban on Ailam Bourka was pushed back;

--March 14, 7-4:30p.m. AST:
The Pakistani-Taliban mounted once again a cohesive attack on Northern Sâlang, infiltrating the front lines. The offensive was forcefully repulsed later the same day.

The on-going intermittent onslaughts by the Pakistani-Taliban are believed to herald an up-coming all out offensive by the Pakistani-Taliban, according to a battle plan discussed on March 10, 2000 at a joint meeting between the Taliban field commanders and a visiting senior Pakistani military corps commander in the Kunduz province, intercepted by the State security services.

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The second round of peace talks between the representatives of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the Taliban militia, sponsored by the Organization of the Islamic

Conference, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, from May 7-10, 2000, ended without any major breakthrough.

The three-day talks, also attended by Mr. Francesc Vendrell, UN Special Representative to Afghanistan, came amidst widespread reports of preparations by the Pakistani-Taliban mercenaries to launch annual major 'summer offensives.' However, proceeding from the high interest in a peaceful solution of the conflict, the Islamic State of Afghanistan took part in the talks in good faith.

The talks were attended by the Islamic State of Afghanistan with the earnest desire of addressing substantial issues, inter alia, the immediate withdrawal of Pakistani military and paramilitary personnel and all other armed foreign nationals and "volunteers" and the formation of a broad-based, multi-ethnic, and fully representative government, as called for by numerous UN GA and SC resolutions. Yet, dismayingly, the issues of abandoning large-scale military offensives, refraining from targeting civilians and guaranteeing free movement of humanitarian assistance, among the four agenda items tabled in Jeddah, were rejected by the Taliban militia, who only agreed to one, namely the exchange of POWs, to be subsequently implemented under joint supervision of a committee composed of the ICRC, the OIC, Iran and Pakistan.

Reacting to the disappointing posturing of the Taliban in the talks, the Islamic State of Afghanistan, for the sake of the record, expressed concerns, among many, on the continued Taliban intransigence, the militia's resort to warfare, and the mercenaries' aim of further targeting innocent civilians.

While wishing for a peaceful solution to the conflict, the Islamic State of Afghanistan remains convinced that the Taliban are still adamant on pursuing a military option, which unveiled quickly in subsequent events.

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On May 11, 2000, one day after the completion of the second round of the OIC Jeddah talks, eyewitness reports reaching the authorities of the Islamic State of Afghanistan revealed that the Taliban prison authorities rounded up as many as 198 hostages imprisoned, predominantly young Uzbek and Hazâra men, from their prison cells in Mazâr, Samangân and Sheberghân, and after having brutally murdered them, buried the hostages in newly dug mass graves, identified to be in the following locations: Tapa-é-Qul Mohammad (a hill) on the outskirts of Mazâr; the mountain ranges of Koh-é-Cheghet in the Province of Samangan; and in the outskirts of Rubâtak Pass in the Province of Samangân.

--Chapter V--

On Loya Jirga or 'the Traditional Grand Assembly' as a Political Solution to the Conflict in Afghanistan

The Islamic State of Afghanistan is aware of the political difficulties involving general elections as a means of realizing the will of the people under the prevailing difficult

circumstances. Duly, the Islamic State of Afghanistan considers the Lôya Jirga (Grand Assembly) as one of the viable options in overcoming the ominous prsent-day Afghan crisis. As such the Islamic State of Afghanistan fully welcomes the Lôya Jirga and is willing to render its utmost cooperation toward its convening.

i. Internal Aspects:

It is crucial to realize that 'Émirate' as an institution negates –either in principle or concept—a genuine Lôya Jirga, and therefore, is doomed to an inevitable slap of bold rejection by the entire Afghan nation. Possessing powers above the law by the virtue of theocratic despotism, through issuance of immediate decrees, which seek to nullify democratic and administrative institutions would absolutely counter the notion of a representative government. Mindful of this, the Islamic State of Afghanistan would continue to cast off the notion of 'Émirate' as unfitting for the Afghan people. Only the Pakistani government has practically recognized the theocratic 'Émirate' and the title of Mullâh Omar as the Amir-ul-Momineen (the Commander of the Faithful).

ii. External Aspects:

Security, by far, is the most important pre-requisite for the convening of the Lôya Jirga. Hence, each and every armed foreign national, including those called 'volunteers', members of different foreign organizations and groups, maintaining direct or covert links to a foreign army, are to leave Afghanistan at once, which would pave the way for the convening of the Lôya Jirga.

iii. Terms of the Lôya Jirga:

An acceptable representative platform is to be established and agreed upon by various segments of the Afghan society.

The Lôya Jirga has to be convened inside Afghanistan.

There is no absolute ethnic majority in Afghanistan. Hence, all major ethnic groups including the Hazâras, the Pashtuns, the Uzbeks and the Tâjiks must be justly and equitably represented in all institutions and governmental bodies. (This however, is not to be construed as either preclusion and or exclusion of other groups including the Turkmen, the Balûchis, the Nooristânis and others.)

iv. The Loya Jirga needs to serve two purposes:

Primarily, the aim is to tackle the present-day Afghan crisis through the establishment of a transitional fully-representative, multi-ethnic and broad-based government, in line

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with the wishes of the Afghan people, under the supervision of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

2. Secondarily, a mandate must be foreseen within multilateral agreements on the convening of the Lôya Jirga for the enactment of a Constitution by the coming Lôya Jirga, which, inter alia, shall include the indispensable 'Principle of Delegation of Authority to Local Administrations.' General and Local elections, conducive to forming a government to replace the transitional setup, will have to be addressed within a clear-cut time-bound framework.

--Chapter VI--
On Explosions in Taliban-held territories of Afghanistan

1. On 10 July and on 17 July 2000, two explosions occurred at the site of the Pakistani Embassy and the diplomatic residence in Kabul. These were preceded by explosions of military depôts in Khair-Khâna and Maidân-Shahr.

Since the aforementioned sites are under complete guard of Taliban soldiers, the reason for their occurrence must be sought in internal rivalry and division among Taliban ranks.

Pakistan is the only country in the world which maintains an active 'diplomatic' mission in Kabul. There is the possibility of plots by the ISI and some Taliban aimed at provoking sympathy in the Pakistani public opinion in favor of this 'mission.'

2. Contrary to Taliban propaganda, the Islamic State of Afghanistan never has and never will resort to such acts of terror.

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(*Signed*) Dr. A. **Abdullâh**
Acting Foreign Minister